

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c), please amend the claims as indicated in marked-up form below, where additions are underlined, deletions are struck through, and new claims are presented without markings.

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A stake removal tool comprising:

a link bar;

a first handle coupled to the link bar and having a first handle axis;

a second handle coupled to the link bar and having a second handle axis, where the first handle axis passes through the first handle at a first point, the second handle axis passes through the second handle at a second point, and the first point and the second point define a first line;

a first gripper attached to the first handle; and

a second gripper attached to the second handle,

wherein:

the first point is on a second line perpendicular to the first line;

the second point is on a third line perpendicular to the first line and parallel to the second line;

the first gripper comprises a first gripper axis and the second gripper comprises a second gripper axis;

the first gripper axis is offset from the first line and from the second line;

the second gripper axis is offset from the first line and from the third line;

each of the first and second grippers comprise:

a first surface and a second surface spaced apart by a circumferential face;  
and

at least one circumferential ridge protruding from and extending  
circumferentially along at least a portion of the circumferential face; and

the at least one circumferential ridge is substantially parallel to the first and  
second surfaces.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

~~the first gripper comprises a first gripper axis and the second gripper comprises a second  
gripper axis;~~

the first gripper axis is offset from the first handle axis by an offset distance; and

the second gripper axis is offset from the second handle axis by the offset distance.

Claim 3. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 2 wherein:

the first handle has a first length;

the second handle has a second length; and

the first length is greater than the offset distance and the second length is greater than the  
offset distance.

Claim 4. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

the link bar comprises an alignment feature.

Claim 5. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

the first gripper is removably attached to the first handle; and

the second gripper is removably attached to the second handle.

Claim 6. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

the at least one circumferential ridge comprises:

a flat portion at a first end of the at least one circumferential ridge.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) A stake removal tool comprising:

a link bar;

a first handle coupled to the link bar at a first handle axis; and

a second handle coupled to the link bar at a second handle axis, where the first handle axis passes through the first handle at a first point, the second handle axis passes through the second handle at a second point, and the first point and the second point define a first line;

wherein:

the first point is on a second line perpendicular to the first line;

the second point is on a third line perpendicular to the first line and parallel to the second line;

the first and second handles each comprise a first end adjacent to the link bar, the first end comprising:

a first surface;

a second surface substantially parallel to the first surface;

a gripping surface between and substantially perpendicular to the first and second surfaces, the gripping surface having a circumferential face coupling together the first and second surfaces;

the gripping surface comprises a touch point where the gripping surface touches a stake to be removed;

the first point and the touch point define a fourth line;

an angle between the fourth line and the first line when the gripping surface contacts the stake to be removed is between approximately 22 and 23 degrees;

the gripping surface comprises at least one circumferential ridge protruding from and extending circumferentially along at least a portion of the circumferential face; and

the at least one circumferential ridge is substantially parallel to the first and second surfaces.

Claim 8. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 7 wherein:

the at least one circumferential ridge comprises:

a flat portion at a first end of the at least one circumferential ridge.

Claim 9. (Original) The stake removal tool of claim 7 wherein:

the link bar comprises an alignment feature.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a stake removal tool, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a link bar;

providing a first handle coupled to the link bar and having a first handle axis;

providing a second handle coupled to the link bar and having a second handle axis;

providing a first gripper attached to the first handle; and

providing a second gripper attached to the second handle,

wherein:

providing the first gripper and the second gripper comprises:

providing a first surface and a second surface spaced apart by a circumferential face; and

providing at least one circumferential ridge protruding from and extending circumferentially along at least a portion of the circumferential face, where the at least one circumferential ridge is substantially parallel to the first and second ~~surfaces~~ surfaces; and

locating the first gripper and the second gripper such that a touch point angle of the stake removal tool is between approximately 22 and 23 degrees.

Claim 11. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 3 wherein:

the first length and the second length exceed the offset distance by an amount sufficient to create a mechanical advantage of at least approximately 14 to 1.

Claim 12. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 3 wherein:

the first gripper is fixedly attached to the first handle such that the first gripper cannot rotate with respect to the first handle and the second gripper is fixedly attached to the second handle such that the second gripper cannot rotate with respect to the second handle.

Claim 13. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 12 wherein:

the first handle is a first one of only two handles of the stake removal tool; and  
the second handle is a second one of the only two handles.

Claim 14. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

the first gripper comprises a first touch point where the first gripper touches a stake to be removed;

the first point and the first touch point define a fourth line;

an angle between the fourth line and the first line is between approximately 20 and 30 degrees.

Claim 15. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 14 wherein:

the second gripper comprises a second touch point where the second gripper touches the stake to be removed;

the second point and the second touch point define a fifth line;

an angle between the fifth line and the first line is between approximately 22 and 23 degrees.

Claim 16. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 1 wherein:

the first handle comprises a first surface coupled to the link bar and a second surface opposite the first surface;

the second handle comprises a third surface coupled to the link bar and a fourth surface opposite the third surface;

the link bar links together the first surface and the third surface; and  
the second surface and the fourth surface are free of any material that would link  
the second surface and the fourth surface, such that the second surface and the fourth surface are  
not linked together.

Claim 17. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 7 wherein:

the gripping surface is a part of a gripper comprising a gripper axis; and  
the gripper axis is offset from the first line and from the second line when the first  
handle is perpendicular to the stake.

Claim 18. (New) The stake removal tool of claim 7 wherein:

the first handle is a first one of only two handles of the stake removal tool; and  
the second handle is a second one of the only two handles.